



From the Publisher's Desk

In 1974, my Rev. father Lala Deep Chand Arya, founder of Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, met Dr. Tulsi Ram and presented him Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Yajurveda Bhashya (4-vols.) edited by Pt. Sudarshan Dev Acharya, published by Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust (1973) with the proposal that he should translate the Veda into English and the Trust will publish the same.

Dr. Tulsi Ram kept the Veda in his library and the proposal in his mind, thinking, studying and contemplating upto year 2000.

Long thought and late begun, in 2000, the translation was completed in 2010, this time not only of one but of all the four Vedas.

The publication was started by Shri Ajay Kumar Arya of Messrs. Govindram Hasanand, Delhi, with Yajurveda in 2011. Then, with the consent and valuable co-operation of Shri Ajay Kumar, the project was continued by Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust with publication of all the four Vedas in 2012.

"There is a Power that shapes our ends:" the same has shaped our acts and achievements from 1974 to 2012. For the author it is his life's mission, for me its Pitr-yajna, for both of us and shri Ajay Kumar, Deva-yajna, for all of us, Brahmajajna.

I am sure the proposal, the mission and the yajna will fructify with fragrance in the heart and soul of the readers.

With thanks to the author and publications supporters and best wishes for the readers.

—Dharampal

Homage, Thanks and Acknowledgements

Homage to Jyeshtha Brahma, the Eternal Guru.

Homage to Immanent Brahma and Will Divine

Homage to Mother Trinity of Ida, Saraswati, Mahi with Barati.

Homage to the Rshis from Brahma to Dayananda.

Homage to Vedic scholars and teachers.

Homage to parents for inspiration and blessings.

Homage to the sacred memory of my wife Maya Jyoti who waited until the last word of this project was written.

Thanks and best wishes to my son Gianendra Sharma for his long, continuous, relentless and indispensable dedication to the practical management of this project till the completion.

Thanks and best wishes to my daughter Indira Sharma and son-in-law Gulab Sharma and my brother Ram Kishan Sharma, wishing, waiting and assuring, with Gianendra Sharma, the publication of this work.

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Thanks and homage of gratitude to the scholars and translators of the Vedas from Swami Dayananda to the present day: Shripad Damodara Satavalekara, Pandit Jaya Deva, Pt. Tulsi Ram Swami, Pt. Kshema Karana Das Trivedi, Prof. Vishwa Nath Vidyamartanda, Pt. Dharma Dev Vidyamartanda, Acharya Vaidyanath Shastri, Swami Satya Prakash, Pt. Devi Chand and a lot many others.

I cannot forget Professor Vachaspati Upadhyaya, Vice-Chancellor, Lal Bahadur Shastri Vidyapeeth, New Delhi, who first read the manuscript of the “Voice of Yajurveda” and enthusiastically encouraged me to go ahead with translation of all the four Vedas for lovers of the Rshis’ tradition.

Thanks to all the scholars who read the manuscript and expressed their candid opinions on this work.

—Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma

CONTENTS

S.No.	Particulars	Page
	From the Publishers Desk	vi
	Homage, Thanks and Acknowledgements	— <i>Dr. Tulsi Ram</i> vii
1.	About the Author	x
2.	Foreword	— <i>Prof. Dr. Subhash Vedalankar</i> xiii
3.	About Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma's English translation of the Rigveda	— <i>Dr. Krishan Lal</i> xvi
4.	English Translation of Vedic Hymns : An Opinion	— <i>Dr. Bhawanilal Bhartiya</i> xvii
5.	Message	— <i>Dr. Balvir Acharya</i> xviii
6.	Message	— <i>Prof. Mahavir</i> xix
7.	Appreciation	— <i>Dr. Baldev Singh</i> xx
8.	Sadbhavana (Good wishes)	— <i>Dr. Umakant Upadhyaya</i> xxi
9.	To the Reader	— <i>Dr. Tulsi Ram</i> xxii
10.	Introduction	— <i>Dr. Tulsi Ram</i> xxx
11.	Diacritical Marks of Transliteration	xl
12.	ATHARVAVEDA :	
	KANDA - I	1-64
	KANDA - II	65-144
	KANDA - III	145-242
	KANDA - IV	243-379
	KANDA - V	380-528
	KANDA - VI	529-714
	KANDA - VII	715-839
	KANDA - VIII	840-950
	KANDA - IX	951-1073
	KANDA - X	1074-1219

About the Author**Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma**

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma M.A. English (Delhi, 1949), Ph.D. (London, 1963) has been a university professor, academic administrator, researcher, and writer of long standing with prestigious assignments:

Lecturer in English, Hans Raj College, Delhi

Reader in the Department of English, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (Haryana)

Principal Shivaji College, Delhi

Principal Swami Shraddhanand College, Delhi

Visiting Ford Foundation Scholar, University of Leeds, Leeds (UK)

Professor of English, Department of Languages, B.I.T.S. Pilani (Rajasthan)

Professor Head of the Department of English, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak (Haryana)

Besides his professional studies of secular literature in English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu, Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has devoted his life and time to the study and discipline of Sacred literature, specially Vedas, Upanishads, Darshan Philosophy, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata with concentration on the Bhagwad Gita, Greek, Roman, Sumerian and English Epics, Gathas of Zarathustra, Bible, Quran, and the writings of Swami Dayananda, and Swami Vivekananda, in search of the essential values of Sanatan Vedic Dharma with reference to their realisation in life and literature through social attitudes, collective action, customs, traditions, rituals and religious variations across the fluctuations of history.

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma's research and publications include:

The Neo-Classical Epic: an Ethical Interpretation (Delhi, 1971)

Trading in Language: The Story of English in India 1781-1981 (Delhi, 1983)

The Original Philosophy of Yoga: Commentary on the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali (Gurukul Jhajjar, Haryana, 1989)

Bharat Main Angrezi: Kya Khoya Kya Paya (Delhi, 1997)

Swami Dayanand's Vision of Truth (Delhi, 2002)

Translation of *Nine Upanishads* (Delhi, 1992)

Translation of *Swami Dayanand's Sanskar Vidhi* (Delhi, 1995)

Translation of Swami Dayananda's short writings in *Dayananda Granth Mala* (Paropakarini Sabha,

Ajmer, Rajasthan, 1999)

Translation of Swami Satya Pati's *God Realisation through Simple Yoga* (Delhi, 2000)

And a number of articles such as:

"Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Man" (Prabuddha Bharat, 1979)

"G.D.Birla: Gandhi's child", in Birla Felicitation Volume (BITS, Pilani, Rajasthan)

"Search for a Medium of Instruction in India", in Mitra Felicitation Volume (BITS, Pilani)

"Shakespeare as a Creative Yogi" in *Shakespeare: the Indian Icon*, edited by Vikram Chopra for J.L.Halio

And now translation of the Vedas, in the Arsha tradition of Maharshi Yaska and Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has spent the last ten years on this translation of the four Vedas, all the time saying: "I came for this". While English has been the language of his professional communication, Sanskrit is the voice of his life and living.

Foreword

Veda Bhashya by Prof. Tulsiram – A step to make Vedas available to the English World

I have had the privilege of going through some of the chapters of Yajurveda Bhashya written by Prof. Tulsiram, a well known Vedic scholar and author of English language and literature. I congratulate him because he has done this translation for an average English reader who is keen to know the Vedas. Knowledge of the Vedas is like the knowledge of science. Vedic language is a scientific language and nobody can understand that without the profound knowledge of Vedangas, especially Nirukta of Maharshi Yaska and the grammar of Panini and Patanjali. Nobody can interpret the Veda mantras without these two. This translation proves that Prof. Tulsiram has done this insightful translation after doing hard work in both Vedangas.

In translating the Vedas, only literal meaning is just not sufficient, sometimes it may create confusion and contradiction. Prof. Tulsiram deeply merges himself into Vedic Mantras, thinking deeply about words, derivatives and analyzes the hidden nuances of meaning in their context. For example, ‘Sumitriya na aapa oshadhayah santu.....Yajur. 36, 23’: If we take literal meaning in the ordinary sense, “may the waters, vital forces of life, and herbs be friendly to us and may they be enemies to those who hate us and whom we hate”, it will not make acceptable sense. After raising some questions, he says, “How can we accept this?” So, after going deeply into the words and context he gives this meaning of the said mantra: **May waters, tonics, pranic energies and medicinal herbs be good friends of our health system and immunity and let the same waters, tonics, pranic energies herbal medicines act against those ailments, diseases and**

negativities which injure us, which we hate to suffer and which we love to destroy, moreover let them have no side effects because side effects too help the negativities and injure us.

After giving the actual sense of the Mantra he writes that this Mantra is a reasonable prayer for the health programme of an advanced society, and then, logically in the next Mantra, follows the prayer for a full hundred years and more of life and healthy living (Tacchakshurdevahitam purastat-Yajur.36, 24).

The translation by Prof. Tulsiram is without any extraneous motive and without any extra-academic intention. The translation has been done purely as communication of the Vedic message for the welfare of mankind.

While giving his opinion on the Vedas Prof. Tulsiram writes in his Introduction....Veda is the Voice of God revealed in scientific Vedic Sanskrit free from local color and historical facts, therefore Vedic language is to be interpreted and understood according to its own laws and structure, and the only key available for such interpretation is the Nirukta of Maharshi Yaska and the grammar of Panini & Patanjali. According to Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati, ‘without reference to these bases of Vedic interpretation certain words have been given a distorted meaning in the translations of **Max Muller, Griffith, Whitney and even Sayana.**’ **Actually the torch light for proper translation today, as Aurobindo says, is the Arsha tradition followed by Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati.**

At the end I will say that this translation of Yajurveda, based on Nirukta and Grammar, follows the known ancient Indian tradition. It is factual, without prejudice or hidden motive. Prof. Tulsiram thinks deeply on every word of the

mantra, looks into the context and etymology according to Nirukta and then does the translation. I congratulate him on this one more pioneering step to make the knowledge of Vedas available to the western world and the average English knowing reader. May God give him long and healthy life so that he continues to do this kind of stupendous work.

Prof. Dr. Subhash Vedalankar;
Ex-Prof and Chairman of Sanskrit Department,
Rajasthan University, Jaipur, India.
Presently Chairman, Dept. of Sanskrit and Vedic
Vangmaya, Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati University,
Ajmer, Rajasthan, India.

About Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma's English translation of the Rgveda

I feel myself fortunate and blest with the Grace of God that I received a few pages of the English translation by Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma with introduction of the Yajurveda. The comparative views expressed by him about the Vedas are essential for every student of the Veda since it is a further pointer to scientific research in the field of Vedic interpretation.

Its conclusion is true: "In short Veda is an eternal articulation of omniscience, the voice of God". Each work of Prasthan Trayi i.e. Vedanta, Upanishads and Gita is not a take off from the Vedas but a continuation of Vedic studies in its own context of meditation, meditative teaching and a rousing call to action in a situation of karmic crisis. This English translation is a welcome addition to Vedic studies opening truly a new path establishing with ease the Vedas in the service of humanity.

—Dr. Krishna Lal
Former Professor and Head of Sanskrit Department,
University of Delhi. Delhi.

English Translation of Vedic Hymns: An Opinion

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has taken an uphill task of translating all the four Vedas in lucid and thought provoking English. Most of the translations of Vedas by European scholars depend on the ritualistic meaning given by the medieval commentators like Sayana and others. But Dr. Sharma has taken a new course of translation. He agrees with the idea that the Yajurveda basically propounds the theory of Karma which it explains as Yajna, which neither denotes sacrifice nor mere ritual (Agnihotra etc.). The term Yajna carries a threefold meaning: the worship of God, unification of diverse factors of human society, selfless charity and replenishment of nature and the environment.

The hymns of the Yajurveda carry lofty ideas of spiritual and ethical significance. Most of these mantras are, however, complicated and tough. It is difficult to make out useful meaning and draw important conclusion out of the text. But Dr. Sharma has fully succeeded in drawing out the natural and meaningful content of these mantras. In brief I can say that the present translation of the Vedas will be appreciated by the scholars of this Vedic lore as well as by the lay man who wants to understand the deep meaning of the Vedic texts or at least the basic knowledge hidden in these ancient works. It is all the more satisfying that Dr. Sharma has followed the dicta laid down by Maharshi Yaska and Swami Dayananda Saraswati in translating and explaining the inner wisdom of the sacred mantras.

—**Bhawani Lal Bhartiya**
Ex. Chairman and Professor
Dayananda Chair for Vedic Studies
Punjab University; Chandigarh

AUM

It has been gratifying to go through the English translation of the Vedas rendered by Dr Tulsi Ram Sharma in as much as it conveys to the English-knowing world effectively the profound meaning and transcendental secrets enshrined in the Vedas. The most salient feature of this translation is its simple and lucid English. The Vedic words have been expounded here following the *yaugik* method of the Arsh tradition set up by Yaska, Panini and Patanjali (as opposed to the *rudhi* method which takes only the historically fixed meanings of words caring little for the context and the subject). As per the Arsh tradition name words like Agni, Vayu, Indra, Marut, etc., are synonyms indicating the various attributive names of the One that is the greatest and the most comprehensive 'Tattva' of existence, the Cosmic Spirit. It was Maharshi Dayananda who for the first time after Yaska and Patanjali advocated and followed this principle of interpretation on the basis of ancient supporting material. Dr. Sharma has religiously stuck to this theory while unfolding the truths enshrined in the Vedas. Obviously Dr Sharma's interpretation of Vedic hymns enjoys the authenticity of the Arsh tradition and challenges the western Vedic perspective and the medieval Indian interpretations of the Vedas which now need to be seriously reviewed in our present day context of science and inter-cultural communication.

—**Dr Balvir Acharya**
Professor & Head
Department of Sanskrit, Pali & Prakrit
Maharshi Dayananda University
Rohtak - 124001, Haryana (India)

AUM**MESSAGE**

Above the narrow boundaries of country, time, caste and creed, the Vedas have been a treasure house of eternal universal knowledge and spiritual wisdom. There have been numerous attempts by Indians and foreigners to make the knowledge of these Vedas available to the people at large. Among them the Vedic commentaries of the great social and spiritual leader, Maharshi Dayananda are the best works in this field. Inspired by Swami Dayananda, the translation of the *Yajurveda* into English by Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma is a commendable work in this line. Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has been a great devotee of sacred literature, especially Vedas, Upanishads, and various philosophies. His life long study of the Vedas has given him deep insight into Vedic philosophy. His translation of the *Yajurveda* reveals it fully. Here he has translated the *Yajurveda*, the Veda of Karma, in such a way that even a common reader can grasp its essence. He has very effectively brought out how this Veda teaches us to apply spiritual knowledge in practical life. Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma deserves our congratulations and best wishes for having done translation of all the four Vedas in simple and clear English for the international community.

—Prof. Mahavir

Acharya & Pro-Vice Chancellor
Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya
 Haridwar-249404, Uttarakhand, India

APPRECIATION

I have gone through some chapters of the English translation of *Yajurveda* by Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma. As he has stated at the very beginning of the Introduction, this translation of *Yajurveda* is meant for an average English-knowing reader who is keen to know: What is Veda? What is it about? Is it old or new? To achieve this object, he has followed the Arsh method of interpretation. Accordingly, for example, he has mostly followed the etymological method of literal translation. But whenever he finds that the literal is not helpful in achieving his intended objective, he adds the implied explanation so that the essence of the Vedic hymn is quite clear. For example, his translation of, ‘Yathemam Vacham Kalyanimavadani janebhyah’ is rendered as follows—‘Just as I speak (reveal) this auspicious holy Word of the Veda for all people (without discrimination of high or low), so should you too communicate it to all people of the world, whosoever, whatsoever, where so ever they be’. That is the technique of Swami Dayananda also.

I regard Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma as one in the commendable line of Pundit Damodar Satavalekara who studied Sanskrit at a mature age and did unique work in that language. Dr. Sharma has also mastered the Sanskrit language after his retirement and done full justice to the translation of the Veda. He richly deserves our gratefulness, our expression of gratification and our appreciation for succeeding in his sacred mission of presenting an understandable, logical and above all sensible English translation of Vedas which hitherto was unavailable. Thus a long felt need has been fulfilled. I am sure Dr Sharma’s method of translation will not only be widely approved but will also be followed by others while translating the Vedas in other languages.

—Dr. Baldev Singh

Formerly Professor of Sanskrit
 Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla (India)

Sadbhavana (Good wishes)

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma, is a profound scholar of English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu. But his heart felt devotion goes to sacred literature, especially Vedas, Upanishads, Darshan Philosophy, Puranas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata with concentration on the Bhagwad Gita, Greek, Roman, Sumerian and English Epics, Gathas of Zarathustra, Bible, Quran and the writings of Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda, in search of the essential values of Veda and Sanatan Vedic Dharma. It seems his real spirit and scholarly interest lies in the interpretation of the Vedas. I have gone through some portions of his English translation of Yajurveda and on perusal of this translation, I have marked two characterizing features:

1. His language is perfectly lucid and
2. His translation is faithful to the word and spirit of the Mantras.

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has very correctly observed, “Veda is knowledge of existence, pure and simple, as Science is knowledge. Science is the knowledge of nature as nature is and as it works according to its own laws. In Science, there is no story, no history. Similarly, in the Vedas, there is no story, no history. And just as Science is knowledge in Scientific language, free from local colour and historical variations of form and meaning, so Veda too is knowledge in scientific language, free from local colour and historical variations.”

Veda is ‘Knowledge’ and knowledge is eternal. The interpretation of the Vedas requires the knowledge of the Arsh technique as explained by the Rshis like Yaska, Panini, Patanjali, Dayananda and Aurobindo.

As Veda is pure knowledge, so is this translation in the Arsh tradition, free from myth and history with no local colour, no attitude, no motive, except pure communication of the Original for all.

With best wishes to the author and specially to the readers,

—Umakant Upadhyaya
Formerly Professor of Economics,
Calcutta University.

To the Reader

This translation of the ‘Hymns of Yajurveda’ is an English Version of the Yajurveda for the common reader who wants to acquaint himself or herself with the content of this divine message of the dynamics of Karma, both human and divine, in the context of the nature, structure and purpose of the universe and the condition and position of the human being in it. While the opening mantra launches the human being on life with the exhortation: “Be vibrant as the winds”, the closing mantra seals the success of vibrant humanity in action with the final achievement of “Om Kham Brahma” with Grace Divine.

Life according to the Yajurveda is a journey from the beginning-less beginning to the endless end with the message:

Immortal child of Divinity,
Your roots go deep to Eternity,
Your reach is unto Infinity.
And your path is up and onwards,
Never never downwards.

This version is a scientific translation of the text within the parameters of Yaska and Dayananda with rational understanding of Sayana at the one end and the western scholars at the other. Sayana’s translation is ritualistic especially with reference to yajna. It came at a time when the “Renaissance, Re-awakening of Learning” was far off, not yet just at the next door. Even communication between the East and the West was not as hectic as it became after the advent of the East India Company into India. Thus mutual criticism and appreciation too was silent rather than vocal. Hence Ritualism was just the thing acceptable to a society settled on the side of stagnation more than of fermentation.

Ritual, of course, is sacred. It is the most meticulous programme of action in pursuit of a holistic plan of life and living which arises from a spiritual vision of Divinity. It is conducted with unreserved commitment of will in faultless action, and completed with total surrender in absolute faith. For this reason

yajna in Veda and Upanishad, is described as the highest human action, “Shreshthatamam karma”. This view is accepted in this translation too. But in addition, an extended interpretation of the same view of yajna is incorporated and followed in the light of Swami Dayananda, and also as warranted by the exhortation in the opening mantra: “Apply yourself to the highest form of action, yajna, in the service of Indra, lord of the universe, for the glory of the human nation”. The highest actions in the world of existence, the creative evolution of the universe under the immanent presiding presence of Divinity, and the total corporate action of humanity for progress, peace and freedom, all this is yajna. And this idea leads us to discover for ourselves and understand the science, art and technology of participative living for progress, from the individual level, through the social, to the cosmic, as universal Yajna, human, natural and divine.

There may or may not be an escape from Sayana, but there is no possible escape from Dayananda, and even from westerners especially for the sake of caution and self correction.

I respect the western translators for their clarity and their art of communication. In addition, I find that they did recognise that the ideal way to interpret and explain the Sanskrit words of Indian scriptures such as Vedas was to trace back every word to its root, deconstruct and reconstruct it with the addition of the affixes, and then structurally explain its meaning. That precisely was the approach of Yaska, Panini, Patanjali and Swami Dayananda. Monier Williams, author of the well known *Sanskrit English Dictionary*, himself admired the Indians for their scientific approach to language, specially Sanskrit:

“I draw attention at the very threshold to the fact that the Hindus are perhaps the only nation, except for the Greeks, who have investigated, independently and in a truly scientific manner, the general laws which govern the evolution of language.” (Introduction, p. xii)

He continues in relation to Sanskrit: “The synthetical process which comes into operation in the working of those laws may be well called Samskarana, ‘putting together’, by which I mean that every single word in the highest type of language (called

Sanskrita) is first evolved out of a primary ‘Dhatu’—a Sanskrit term usually translated as ‘Root’, but applicable to any primordial constituent substance, whether of words, or rocks, or living organisms, and then, being so evolved, goes through a process of ‘putting together’ by the combination of other elementary constituents.” [Sanskrit, thus, becomes a language correspondence of the evolution, structure and dynamics of the world of reality, and Veda as articulation of the reality of existence.]

“Furthermore, the process of ‘putting together’ implies, of course, the possibility of a converse process of vyakarana. by which I mean ‘undoing’ or decomposition (deconstruction), that is to say, the resolution of every root-evolved word into its component elements. So that in endeavouring to exhibit these processes of synthesis and analysis, we appear to be engaged, like a chemist, in combining elementary substances into solid forms, and again in resolving these forms into their constituent ingredients.” (p. xii). And in respect of this special character, Sanskrit, he says, is a different language from the Semitic languages (of which the Bible and the Quran are expressions).

And yet, in spite of this clear understanding of Sanskrit, an Arsha dictionary remained with him only “a beautiful philological dream, a dream, however, which could not receive practical shape without raising the Lexicon to a level of scientific perfection unsuited to the needs of ordinary students.” (p. xiii)

Why unsuited? **The answer lies in his mission and the main object of his mission. The scientific way of interpretation and explanation was counter to the purpose for which Monier Williams was appointed Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford** where he occupied the Boden Chair after H.H.Wilson who had been a member of the Committee of Public Instruction in India under Lord Macaulay as Chairman and Lord William Bentinck as Governor General of India. And then English had been accepted and introduced as the medium as well as the content of Education.

Monier Williams says: “One consideration which led my predecessor (Professor H.H.Wilson) to pass on to me his project of a root-arranged Lexicon was that, on being elected to the Boden Chair, he felt that the elaboration of such a work would be

incompatible with the practical objects for which the Boden Professorship was founded. . . **The main object was really a missionary one, as I have shown in the Preface of this volume.**” (p. xi)

The object, Professor Williams explains in the Preface to his Dictionary (p. ix): “I must draw attention to the fact that I am only the second occupant of the Boden Chair, and that its founder, Colonel Boden, stated most explicitly in his will (dated August 15, 1811) that the special object of his munificent bequest was to promote the translation of the Scriptures (that is, the Bible) into Sanskrit, so as ‘to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian Religion’.

“Surely then it need not be thought surprising, if following in the footsteps of my venerated master, I have made it the chief aim of my professional life to provide facilities for the translation of our sacred Scriptures into Sanskrit, and for the promotion of a better knowledge of the religions and customs of India as the best way to a knowledge of the religious needs of our great Eastern Dependency (India). My very first public lecture delivered after my election (to the Boden Chair) in 1860 was on ‘The Study of Sanskrit in Relation to Missionary Work in India’ (published in 1861)”. (pp. xxi)

For any student of Veda, specially in India, in fact anywhere, it is difficult to overlook the words of Monier Williams in the Preface and Introduction to his Dictionary of Sanskrit, for the reason that **from translation of Christian Scriptures into Sanskrit with a missionary motive, the translation of Sanskrit Scriptures into English was but the next and ‘logical’ step with that same missionary motive of conversion, one to extol, the other to denigrate:**

One example, of extolment, is the following translation of the Bible, ‘The Gospel according to John’:

*Yohana-likhitah Susamvādah;
Īshvarasya vākyam Yishor mahatvam avatāra kathā ca.*

Jesus here is presented as an Avatara, someone a very God for the traditional Hindu, although the Gospel does not mention the incarnation at all. (The translation of The Bible in Sanskrit by

J.Wenger is available on the internet.)

The other example, of denigration, is given here below from W.D. Whitney’s translation of the Atharvaveda (7, 107, 1) edited and revised by K.L. Joshi, published by Parimal Publications, Delhi, 2004:

*Namaskṛtya dyāvāprthivībhyāmantarikṣāya mṛtyave.
Mekṣāmyūrdhvastiṣṭhan mā mā hinsīṣhurīśvarāḥ.*

“Having paid homage to heaven and earth, to the atmosphere, to Death, I will urinate standing erect; let not the Lords (Ishvara) harm me.”

I give below an English rendering of the same mantra translated by Pundit Satavalekara in Hindi:

“Having done homage to heaven and earth and to the middle regions and Death (Yama), I stand high and watch (the world of life). Let not my masters hurt me.”

An English rendering of the same mantra translated by Pundit Jai Dev Sharma in Hindi is the following:

“Having done homage to heaven and earth (i.e. father and mother) and to the immanent God and Yama (all Dissolver), standing high and alert, I move forward in life. These masters of mine, pray, may not hurt me.”

I would like to quote my own translation of the mantra now under print:

“Having done homage to heaven and earth, and to the middle regions, and having acknowledged the fact of death as inevitable counterpart of life under God’s dispensation, now standing high, I watch the world and go forward with showers of the cloud. Let no powers of earthly nature hurt and violate me.”

‘Showers of the cloud’ is a metaphor, as in Shelley’s poem ‘the Cloud’: “I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers”, which suggests a lovely rendering.

The problem here arises from the verb ‘mekshami’ from the root ‘mih’ which means ‘to shower’ (*sechane*). It depends on the translator’s sense and attitude to sacred writing how the message is received and communicated in an interfaith context

with no strings attached (or unattached).

This extolment and denigration was happening around the time when the English language, English education and missionary work had been introduced into India and was raging on top. Swami Dayananda faced this challenge with boldness and caution, still with an open mind, all prepared even for correction. He based his interpretation of the Vedas on *Nirukta* and the etymological principles of word interpretation, and interpretation of the word in the context, both local and total, because the local is an integral part of the total whole.

We are living in an age of science and reason, democracy and freedom, globalism and global communication, and we feel the need for a free and frank interfaith dialogue. In such an age, ritualism and mythology is not enough. If we want to understand and present Veda as a body of universal knowledge and articulation of divine awareness of existence, there is no escape from Yaska, Panini, Patanjali, Dayananda and Aurobindo, because they provide the key principles and practice of scientific interpretation of an ancient scientific language such as Vedic Sanskrit which has no historical parallel for comparison. The language of science tells no stories, no myths. It states the truth pure and simple. Hence the resort to Swami Dayananda, either before or after Sayana and the western scholars, is indispensable.

There is one observation I must make on Swami Dayananda. Swami Dayananda has given a socio-economic orientation to the Vedic mantras because he underscores the relevance of the Vedas to the social, economic and political situation of humanity, especially in India, which was necessary and highly meaningful. For example, the Ashwins, in general, are the complementary powers of nature and humanity working as twin forces like the positive and negative currents of electricity, or like the theoretician and the laboratory man, or the curative and recuperative powers of medicine and nature's powers of rejuvenation. Swami Dayananda often explains such powers in the interest of practical understanding: he defines them as teacher and preacher, or father and mother, sun and moon, fire and water, prana and Apana energy, ruler and council, scientist and engineer, and so on, depending on the mantra context. Sometimes it appears

as if he is delimiting the open-ended general meaning of the Veda. But we should be careful before we say so, and realise that the definiteness of his meaning is illustrative and in no way exhaustive. In this translation such situations have been appreciated and the meaning has been kept open ended, inclusive of the meanings given by Swami Dayananda, as suggested by Yaska and the etymology of the terms. In short, this translation has been done with cautious reference to Sayana, under the guidance of Swami Dayananda, with respect for Pundit Satavalekara and with very careful observance of the western anglers.

Pundit Satavalekara comes in between Sayana and swami Dayananda for his excellent syntactic structures of mantra meanings in continuous Hindi. But he explains words such as Indra, Agni, Ashwins, Vritra, Trita, Bhujyu, Kashyapa, Jamadagni, etc. as proper names so that the mantra appears to be a mythical or historical statement of either fact or fiction. But Swami Dayananda interprets these terms in the yaugic manner and explains them as scientific terms of the forms, functions, orders and attributes of the powers of existence representing the manifestive diversity of one Divinity and one Prakrti in the state of objective existence. These words are not historical names, because the time context of the creation of the Vedas remains unknown beyond history and imagination as even Max Muller confessed in his Gifford lectures in 1890.

This translation respects the entire tradition of Vedic interpretation, and under the guidance of this tradition takes Vedic interpretation to the original level of scientific rationality in the context of modern consciousness, modern language and global culture, a message both sanatana and, at the same time, modern (ref. Atharva, 10,8,23).

Take just one example of the problem I have faced, with the solution I have suggested: Yajurveda (36, 23) says, if we take the literal meaning in the ordinary sense: "May the waters, pranic energies and herbs be friendly to us and may they be enemies to those who hate us and whom we hate." How can we accept this? How can the same waters, tonics and herbs be good friends to us and enemies to those we hate or those who hate us? Medicine is

medicine after all. This is excellent stuff for a translator who believes that Vedic poetry is nothing but the voice of a tribal society in the barbaric, not civilized, state of social evolution. But let us think deeply. What is the context? Who are our enemies in that context? Who or what are those that injure us? What are those we hate or want to injure and destroy? The context is health. In the context of health, they are the ailments, diseases, germs and bacteria, viruses, negativities and side effects of medicines in our system. So the correct and scientific interpretation in the context of health would be: “May waters, tonics, pranic energies and medicinal herbs be good friends of our health and immunity system and let the waters, tonics, pranic energies and herbal medicines act against those ailments, diseases and negativities which injure us, which we hate to suffer and which we love to destroy. Moreover let them have no side effects because side effects too aggravate the negativities and injure us.” This is the reasonable prayer and health programme of an advanced society. And then, logically in the next mantra, follows the prayer for a full hundred years and more of life and healthy living (Yajurveda, 36, 24). Veda thus is food for thought.

In human terms: If a legendary celebrity can admire another human figure as “inscrutable, apocalyptic, a mysterious poem written in flesh and blood”, how much more – infinitely more – mysterious, inscrutable, apocalyptic would be the Cosmic Poem (Devasya Kavyah) created in the language of the Ultimate Vision?

Veda is a Cosmic Poem: the more we know, the more we know the Veda, and the more we know the Veda, the more we know.

Indeed, every reader should stand before the Veda, every verse of It in fact, as Arjuna stood before the Cosmic Krishna, waiting and watching intently, for the burst of a thousand suns, for the Dawn on top of the Earth, for the Revelation.

May the light burst forth, I pray.

—Tulsi Ram

Introduction to Atharva-Veda

This translation of Atharvaveda is meant for an average English knowing reader who is keen to know:

What is Veda? What is it all about? Is it old or new?

If it's old, what is its relevance today? And if it is relevant, is it relevant to me also? Or is it relevant only to some particular community in some particular country at some particular time?

These are relevant questions especially in an age of science, democracy and globalism.

Veda is Knowledge. The very word ‘Veda’ means knowledge. It is derived from the root ‘vid’, which means: ‘to be, to know, to think, and to benefit from’.

So whatever is is Veda, the very world of existence is Veda. The knowledge of the world of existence is Veda. The extension of knowledge through thought and research further is Veda. And to use that knowledge for the benefit of mankind with the protection and preservation of nature and the environment, without hurting any form of life, that is Veda.

Veda is knowledge, pure and simple, as science is knowledge. Science is knowledge of nature as nature is and as it works according to its own laws. In science, there is no story no history. Similarly in the Veda, there is no story, no history. And just as science is knowledge in scientific language free from local colour and historical variations of form and meaning, so Veda too is knowledge in scientific language free from local colour and historical variations. Therefore Vedic language has to be interpreted and understood according to the laws and technique of its own structure as stated by seers such as Yaska, Panini and Patanjali

and as explained by Swami Dayananda in his grammatical works and his notes on Vedic words in his commentary on the Vedas.

But there is a difference between scientific knowledge and Vedic knowledge: While science is knowledge of nature to the extent that man has been able to discover it, Veda is the quintessential knowledge of all that is, including nature, all that happens, all that we are, all that we do, and all that we reap in consequence of our action. It is the Original and Universal knowledge of the Reality of Existence and the Ideality of our aspirations, covering the facts and processes of existence, their interaction and the laws that operate in the interaction. In short, Veda is an eternal articulation of Omniscience, The Voice of God.

Vedic knowledge is classified thematically into three: Stuti, Prarthana and Upasana. Stuti, praise, is solemn reverential remembrance and description of the attributes, nature, character and function of divine powers. Prarthana, prayer, is an autosuggestive resolution to realise our limitations and rise above those limitations by calling on Divinity for aid and blessings when we have exhausted our effort and potential. Upasana is meditation, the surrender of our limited identity to participate in the Divine Presence. Stuti implies knowledge (Jnana), Prarthana implies humility and action (Karma), and Upasana implies total love and surrender (Bhakti). In consequence, formally, Vedic knowledge is divided into four:

Rgveda is the Veda of Knowledge, Yajurveda is the Veda of Karma, Samaveda is the Veda of Bhakti, and Atharva-veda is Brahma Veda, an umbrella, celebrating the over all Divine Presence as in Book 10, hymns 7 and 8.

Atharva-Veda is Brahma Veda, umbrella knowledge of existence both Murta and Amurta, concrete and abstract.

It is the knowledge of Prakrti, Mother Nature, as well as of Purusha, the Soul, the individual Jiva as well as the Cosmic Soul, Brahma. It begins with a celebrative description of the thrice-seven variant evolutes of Prakrti and a prayer to Vachaspati, Lord of Nature and the Word of Knowledge, to bless us with the strength, energy, intelligence and knowledge emanating from those thrice-seven forms of the world of Nature and Spirit. It covers the world of humanity from the individual to the total collective personality of humanity, including social structures from the family, community and the nation up to the international United Nations. It pays homage to Divinity, Jyeshtha Brahma, Supreme Presiding Spirit and Power, immanent and transcendent, which creates and sustains and winds up the world of existence in each cycle of creation, eternally (10, 7-8, and 19, 6). Towards the end Atharva-Veda pays homage to Brahma and Mother Veda with thanks for the gifts of good health and full age, vibrant pranic energy, noble progeny, ample wealth, fame, lasting achievement and divine lustre of life. These are the gifts of Vedic knowledge in life, and when one cycle of existence reaches the hour of completion, the Mother Knowledge returns to her eternal and Original abode, Jyeshtha Brahma Itself, the mighty, mysterious, awful Silence, impenetrable Darkness, Smaller than the smallest conceivable, yet Greater than the greatest imaginable, the Original and Ultimate Home of all that matter, energy, thought and Speech is, beyond time and space.

Some of the important themes of Atharva-Veda are:

Kala, Time (19, 53-54), Kama, Desire (9, 2; 19, 52), God is One (7, 21; 13, 4), Jyeshtha Brahma, Supreme God (10, 7-8; 8, 9-10), Worship (7, 14-16 and 21), Brahma Vidya (9, 1), Creative evolution (15, 1-18), Cosmic self-organising organism (19, 1-6), Cosmic Dynamics (11, 2), Holy Cow

metaphor of the universe (7, 104;10, 9-10; 12, 4-5), Sun metaphor of Divinity (13, 1-4), Cosmic peace (19, 9-12), Mother Earth (12, 1), Human soul, birth, rebirth, Yama and the mystery of the human being (10, 2), Brahmacharya (11, 5), Love, marriage and family life (7, 37-38; 14, 1-2), Hospitality (9-6), Social organisation (7, 12), Rashtra, Nation (7, 35; 19,24), War and peace (11, 9-10), Victory, freedom and security (16, 8; 17, 1), Language (7, 43), Sarasvati (7, 10), Paradise and bliss (4, 36); 12, 3). There are many other themes such as health and age, cure of diseases including cancer, poison and depression, sun, moon, night and day, full moon and dark night, freedom from desire, freedom of speech, election, parliament, dealing with evil, violence, sabotage and enemies, and personal, familial and social management.

As you open the text of Atharvaveda, you find the words: Vachaspati Devata, Atharva Rshi. 'Devata' here means the subject which is dealt with in the mantra. 'Devata' as a Vedic term means a presence, a power, a force, which is brilliant, illuminative, and generous. The 'Devata' of a mantra may be God, the One Sacchidananda Brahma, or Savita, the same One self-refulgent God; or it can be a generous divine power of Nature such as the sun, moon, earth; or it can be a noble person of brilliant quality of nature, character and performance as a ruler, leader, commander, teacher, etc. What the 'Devata' means in any particular mantra depends on the total context that emerges from the mantra in its thematic environment of the hymn.

Atharva is the Rshi of the opening mantra. The Rshi in the Arsha tradition is not the author of the mantra, Rshi is the exponent of the meaning of the mantra. As Maharshi Yaska says in the Nirukta, Rshis are the 'seers of the mantras': they are the sages who went into deep meditation unto the

universal frequency of the Cosmic Mind and experienced the voice of Divinity speaking in the mantra, the mantra, a semantic correspondence of the Divine Voice, the Divine Voice, a sound correspondence of Divine Awareness of the Reality of Existence in the modes of Being and Becoming.

Who then is the poet of the Vedas? The answer is in Yajurveda 40, 8: That Cosmic Spirit which pervades and rules every moving particle in the moving universe is "the poet, thinker, all-comprehending, and self-existent". That is the Lord who creates the world of existence, ordains the Laws of its dynamics, and reveals the poetry of its beauty and majesty, the Vedas. "From that Lord of universal yajna were born the Rks and Samans. From Him were born the Chhandas of Atharva-veda and from Him were born the Yajus" (Yajurveda 31, 7). The Vedic lore comes in Pura-kalpa, the beginning of the world of humanity (Shvetashvataropanisad, 6, 22) and when its function is over at the end of the kalpa, one cycle of existence, it retires into Brahma-loka (Atharva-veda 19, 71, 1).

The Vedas were revealed by the Lord Omniscient to four primeval Rshis: Rgveda to Agni, Yajurveda to Vayu, Samaveda to Aditya, and Atharva-veda to Angira, directly in their spiritual consciousness. The Sage Brahma received and collected the four from them and passed them on to other sages.

When were the Vedas revealed? What is their age? How old are they? As old as the age of humanity on earth. The Lord who creates humanity leaves them not to nature as animals. He enlightens them with the knowledge of existence and their place in the world with the vision of their journey and its culmination. Swami Dayananda works out the age of the Vedas on the basis of Surya Siddhanta which in the year 2010 A.D. comes to 1,96,08,53,110 years.

If someone does not accept it and insists on historical proof, let us listen to Max Muller from whom we learn of the problem of the date or dates but with no possibility of solution on scientific and historical grounds.

Max Muller is known as a world renowned Vedic scholar and exegetist of the West. Max Muller once ventured to pronounce a purely arbitrary date based on unproven assumptions that around 1200 B.C. was the date of the Rgveda. Later, he himself warned his students that “Whether the Vedic Hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 B.C., no power on earth could ever fix Whatever may be the date of the Vedic hymns... they have their own unique place and stand by themselves”. Such daring presumptions of western scholars about the date of the Vedas are exposed by Graham Hancock in his latest researches, in his explosive book: Underworld: The Mysterious Origins of Civilization (2002).

Hancock first gives the range of dates accepted by Western scholars such as Max Muller and Dr. Mitchiner, a great authority on ancient Sanskrit texts: Vedas 1500-800 BC, Brahmanas 900-600 BC, Aranyakas 700-500 BC, Upanishads 600-400 BC, Mahabharata 350 BC-350 AD, Ramayana 250 BC-200AD, Puranas AD 200-1500. “Amazing!” says he: “Whether starting in 1500 BC, 1400 BC or 1200 BC, the timelines suggested for the compilation and codification of the Vedas, all rest on the now thoroughly falsified and bankrupt (and rejected) idea of an Aryan invasion of India around 1500 BC”. He continues: “There was no such thing as an Aryan race that spoke Indo-European languages and authored the Vedas, there was no such event as an Aryan invasion of India. ‘Arya’ does not mean a race, it means a noble, educated and cultured person. So once the hypothesis of the Aryan invasion is rejected, the structure of

the supposed dates of the Vedas and other texts crumbles like a house of cards.’ And then he sums up his view of the Western approach to the Vedas and Indian civilization: “Almost everything that was ever written about this literature and civilization before five years ago (i.e., before 1997) is wrong.” (See pp. 131, 116, 129)

Max Muller himself in his Gifford Lectures in 1890 had confessed that “no power on earth could ever fix” the date of the Vedas. Even Mitchiner himself concedes that “the dating of Sanskrit texts is a notoriously difficult problem” (Quoted Ibid p. 131).

Who could then possibly speak the truth about ancient Indian civilisation and the Vedic literature? Says Hancock (p. 105): “Perhaps we are coming to a time when ancient India will speak for herself again after millennia of silence.” It was Swami Dayananda who spoke for India and the Vedas in the Rshis’ tradition after millennia of silence to correct the distortions of Indian history and redeem Vedic literature and the Vedic tradition.

If no history, no Science, no human imagination can help, better follow the sages tradition, Surya Siddhanta, and the daily sankalpa of the dedicated Brahmanas. And lastly follow the internal evidence of the Vedas themselves: Vedas are the Original, Universal, Eternal articulation of Divinity, by Divinity, for humanity at the beginning of human creation. (Yajurveda, 26, 2; Shvetashvataropanishad, 6, 18)

Since Vedas are the oldest recorded knowledge of the world, no one can guess how much time, even ages, might have passed between the Vedas and the next work in Sanskrit. If so, there is no other work in Sanskrit comparable to the Vedas. Consequently the language of any other work would not provide any clue for the interpretation of Veda mantras. Vedic language then has to be interpreted on its own, and the

only key available for such independent interpretation is the Nirukta and Nighantu of Maharshi Yaska, the grammatical works of Panini and Patanjali, and Swami Dayananda's notes in his commentary on Vedic verses explaining the structure and meaning of words. Without reference to these bases of Vedic interpretation, certain words have been given a very distorted meaning in other translations by Max Muller, Griffith, Whitney, and even Sayana. The torch light for proper translation today is the Arsha tradition followed by Swami Dayananda.

The Arsha way is the only right way, the key, to discover the truth of the Vedas. According to Shri Aurobindo, Swami Dayananda alone, in modern times, possessed this key to the secret of the Vedas. Interpreted this way the Vedas shine in their essential scientific refulgence. As science is pure knowledge, no story, no history, no mythology, so are the Vedas, pure knowledge: knowledge of nature, mind, spirit, human society, Dharma, the dynamics of existence and the right way of living as individuals and as members of organised society upto the international level. Even Max Muller, though he was once committed to uprooting the religion of India by his arbitrary translation of Rgveda, had to admit in his Biographical Essays that: "To Swami Dayananda, everything contained in the Vedas was not only perfect truth, but he went one step further and, by their interpretation, succeeded in persuading others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam Engines, Electricity, Telegraphy and Wireless Marconogram were shown to have been at least in the germ known to the poets of the Vedas". In fact Shri Aurobindo in his essay on "Dayananda and the Veda" goes even further: "There is nothing fantastic in Dayananda's idea that Veda contains truth

of science as well as truth of religion (i.e., Dharma). I will even add my own conviction that Veda contains other truths of a Science the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case, Dayananda has rather understated than overstated the depth and range of the Vedic wisdom (see 'Bankim, Tilak, Dayananda', p. 57).

The basic requirement of scriptural interpretation for us is faith and intellingetial solemnity, not doubt and cynicism. This way, if we want to confirm our faith in the scientific vision of the Veda, refer to Rgveda 1, 34, 7 and 9 for three-stage rocket chariot of the Ashwins, to 1, 36, 18 for Agni missile, to 1, 37, 3 for winds and communication, to 1, 46, 10 for concentration of light, to 1, 52, 1 and 1, 36, 1 for the science of missile defence and space-craft, to 6, 46, 11 for missiles and war heads, and so on. The position of the solar system with planets and satellites, earth's and sun's gravitation, solar healing, parliamentary democracy, organisational structure of the nation and the international world, water and electric energy, and so many other subjects are hinted at in Vedic verses. We need serious research to work out the details. Had even Einstein read the Purusha Sukta of the Vedas and Brahma Sutras and Sankhya Vaisheshika philosophy, probably he would have found clues to his search for Unified Field theory of the universe.

Beyond faith and intelligential solemnity we need vision, potential Darshan of the Vedic Rshis. Once you have had the vision of truth, doubts disappear and questions recede into silence because, then, nothing shines but the Truth and Divinity Itself reveals It's Reality with showers of Grace. In this mood and in this spirit, I suggest, you start your search for Vedic Truth and the Mystery of Existence.

Lastly, if the Vedic lore is as old as humanity itself, what is its relevance today in the modern world? Ask yourself

other questions: What is the relevance of Galileo or Newton or the Theory of Relativity, two plus two makes four, Swaraj, the Vedic word for freedom and self-discipline? Truth is truth, when the statement was or is made is irrelevant. Vedic truth, if you find it convincing and acceptable, is relevant not only for today but also for all time, to every person, everywhere.

Yajurveda itself says (26, 2):

“Yathemam vacham kalyanim avadani janebhyah”:

Just as I speak (reveal) this auspicious holy Word of the Veda for all people (without any discrimination of high or low), so should you too communicate it to all people of the world whoever, whatever, wherever they be.

—Tulsi Ram

DIACRITICAL MARKS OF TRANSLITERATION

Vowels

अ	a	आ	ā	इ	i	ई	ī
उ	u	ऊ	ū	ऋ	ṛ	ॠ	ṝ
लृ	lṛ	लृ	ṝ				
ए	e	ऐ	ai	ओ	o	औ	au
अनुस्वार (¨)		m		विसर्ग (:)		ḥ	
		(˘)		ñ			

Consonants

Guttural

क्	k	ख्	kh	ग्	g	घ्	gh	ङ्	ṅ
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Palatal

च्	c	छ्	ch	ज्	j	झ्	jh	ञ्	ñ
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Lingual

ट्	ṭ	ठ्	ṭh	ड्	ḍ	ढ्	ḍh	ण्	ṇ
----	---	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	---

Dental

त्	t	थ्	th	द्	d	ध्	dh	न्	n
----	---	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	---

Labial

प्	p	फ्	ph	ब्	b	भ्	bh	म्	m
----	---	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	---

others

य्	y	र्	r	ल्	l	व्	v
----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---

श्	ś	ष्	ṣ	स्	s	ह्	h
----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---

(ऽ)	'	श्च	ṣc	म्	m
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